

CLAIMS

1. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) A method of removing blockages of hydrates or paraffins from the inside of a subsea pipeline by the steps of
 - landing a remotely operated vehicle on said subsea pipeline,
 - engaging said subsea pipeline with traction means which are powered to control the movement of said remotely operated vehicle along said pipeline,
 - sealingly engaging the outer surface of said subsea pipeline,
 - flowing seawater over a portion of the outer surface of said subsea pipeline,
 - heating the seawater which is flowing over the outer surface of said subsea pipeline to a temperature higher than the ambient temperature surrounding said subsea pipeline, and
 - after said seawater is circulated over said portion of the outer surface of said subsea pipeline, recirculating said seawater back into circulating pumps, past the means of heating said seawater again, and over the portion of the outer surface of said pipeline again,
 - such that said hydrates or paraffins will melt and form liquids and/or gases.
2. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The method as claimed in claim 1, whereby the step of heating said seawater includes using an electrical resistance heater.
3. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The method as claimed in claim 1, whereby the step of heating said seawater includes providing a differential pressure across a pressure reducing means.

4. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The method as claimed in claim 1, whereby the step of heating said seawater includes mixing of chemicals which produce heat upon mixture.

5. The method as claimed in claim 1, whereby said traction means are rollers which are curved on the outer surface to partially conform the outer surface of said subsea pipeline.

6. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The method as claimed in claim 1, whereby the outer surface of said subsea pipeline is engaged by resilient flappers.

7. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of removing hydrates or paraffins from the inside of a subsea pipeline by

having a remotely controlled vehicle place a circulation chamber adjacent to said pipeline said, circulation chamber having an open side to said pipeline,

engaging said subsea pipeline to control the movement of said remotely controlled vehicle along said pipeline,

[repeatedly] circulating seawater alternately over a portion of the outer surface of said pipeline and over heating means to cause the hydrates or paraffins to melt into liquids and/or gases within said subsea pipeline.

8. The invention of claim 7 wherein said heating means is electric heating. [9]

9. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The invention of claim 7 wherein said heating means is a pressure reducing means.

10. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The invention of claim 7 wherein said heating means is chemical.

11. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The invention of claim 7 further comprising the step of moving a circulation chamber along the subsea pipeline while circulating said seawater.

12. The invention of claim 11 wherein resilient seals are provided between said circulation chamber and said subsea pipeline to separate said heated seawater within said circulation chamber from the seawater outside said circulation chamber.

13. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of removing hydrates or paraffins from a subsea pipeline by

having a [remote] remotely controlled vehicle place a circulation chamber adjacent to said]pipeline said,] pipeline, said circulation chamber having an open side to said pipeline,

engaging said subsea pipeline to control the movement of said remotely controlled vehicle along said pipeline,

repeatedly circulating seawater out of said circulation chamber, through heating means, back into said circulation chamber, and across a portion of said pipeline,

such that heated seawater will be circulated across said portion of said pipeline to warm said pipeline and heat added to said [the] seawater not transferred to said portion of said pipeline will increase the inlet seawater temperature to the heating means.

14. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The invention of claim 13 wherein said hydrates or paraffins are melted into liquids or gases to eliminate a blockage.

15. The invention of claim 13 wherein said heating means is electric heating.

16. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The invention of claim 13 wherein said heating means is a pressure reducing means.

17. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The invention of claim 13 wherein said heating means is chemical].

18. The invention of claim 13 wherein a circulation chamber is moved along said subsea pipeline while circulating said heated fluid on said subsea pipeline.

19. The invention of claim 18 wherein resilient seals are provided between said circulation chamber and said pipeline to separate said heated fluid within said circulation chamber from the seawater outside said circulation chamber.

20. (WITHDRAWN) A method of removing a blockage from a subsea pipeline comprising converting energy into heat in seawater below sea level and adjacent to said subsea pipeline.

21. (WITHDRAWN) The invention of claim 20 wherein said blockage is hydrates or paraffins.

22. (WITHDRAWN) The invention of claim 21 wherein said hydrates or paraffins are melted into liquids or gases to eliminate the blockage.

23. (WITHDRAWN) The invention of claim 20 wherein said intermediate fluid is seawater.

24. (WITHDRAWN) The invention of claim 20 wherein said heat is generated by electric heating.

25. (WITHDRAWN) The invention of claim 20 wherein said heat is generated by a flowing said fluid across a pressure reducing means.

26. (WITHDRAWN) The invention of claim 20 wherein said heat is generated by chemicals.

27. (WITHDRAWN) The invention of claim 20 wherein a circulation chamber is moved along said subsea pipeline while circulating said heated fluid on said subsea pipeline.

28. (WITHDRAWN) The invention of claim 27 wherein resilient seals are provided between said circulation chamber and said pipeline to separate said heated fluid within said circulation chamber from the seawater outside said circulation chamber.

29. (WITHDRAWN) The method of removing a blockage from a buried subsea pipeline comprising placing a circulation chamber adjacent to said buried subsea pipeline and circulating a heated fluid on a portion of the surface of said buried subsea pipeline, and further comprising the step of moving said circulation chamber along said buried subsea pipeline while circulating said heated fluid.

30. (WITHDRAWN) The invention of claim 29 wherein said blockage is hydrates or paraffins.

31. (WITHDRAWN) The invention of claim 30 wherein said hydrates or paraffins are melted into liquids or gases to eliminate the blockage.

32. (WITHDRAWN) The invention of claim 29 wherein said fluid is seawater.

33. (WITHDRAWN) The invention of claim 29 wherein heat is generated near the seafloor to heat said fluid.

34. (WITHDRAWN) The invention of claim 33 wherein said heat is generated by electric heating.

35. (WITHDRAWN) The invention of claim 33 wherein said heat is generated by flowing said fluid across a pressure reducing means.

36. (WITHDRAWN) The invention of claim 33 wherein said heat is generated by chemicals.

37. (WITHDRAWN) The invention of claim 29 wherein said circulation chamber is moved along said buried subsea pipeline while circulating said heated fluid on said subsea pipeline.

38. (WITHDRAWN) The invention of claim 29 wherein resilient seals are provided between said circulation chamber and said pipeline to separate said heated fluid within said circulation chamber from the seawater outside said circulation chamber.